

THE IDEA OF MAHMUD YUNUS TO REFORM ARABIC TEACHING

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Abstract

In Indonesian Islamic education, Mahmud Yunus is an educationalist who is full of idea and discourse to reform the Islamic education. Moreover, as the one who get involved in Religious department bureaucracy and other structural positions in Islamic institution, including his last career as the first rector of Imam Bonjol Islamic Institution of Padang, Mahmud Yunus has some chances to manifest his idea and discourse widely through his positions. If we try to analyze his idea on reformation in education and teaching, we can clearly see that he has put serious attention to Arabic Language and Arabic teaching. He has written many books such as Arab-Indonesia Dictionary (Qamus), Arabic Language Textbook, called Durus al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, and a special book about Arabic Teaching.

Abstrak

Dalam dunia pendidikan [Islam] Indonesia, Mahmud Yunus adalah seorang pegiat pendidikan yang sarat dengan ide dan wacana untuk reformasi pendidikan [Islam]. Lebih dari itu, sebagai orang yang terlibat dalam birokrasi Departemen Agama dan jabatan-jabatan struktural lainnya di perguruan tinggi Agama Islam, termasuk karirnya yang terakhir sebagai rektor yang pertama untuk IAIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Mahmud Yunus mempunyai kesempatan untuk memanasifestasikan ide dan wacana tersebut secara lebih luas lewat jabatan/posisi yang dimilikinya. Kalau dianalisa dari ide-ide reformasi dalam dunia pendidikan dan pengajaran yang ditawarkan oleh Yunus, akan kelihatan dengan sangat jelas bahwa Bahasa Arab dan pengajaran Bahasa Arab mendapat perhatian yang serius dari Mahmud Yunus. Dalam bidang ini, Mahmud Yunus menulis berbagai karya, mulai dari Qamus Arab-Indonesia, buku pelajaran Bahasa Arab seperti Durus al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, dan buku tentang metode khusus pengajaran Bahasa Arab itu sendiri.

Kata Kunci: Mahmud Yunus, pengajaran bahasa Arab, reformasi pendidikan.

INTRODUCTION

Mahmud Yunus: A Brief Biographical Sketch

Mahmud Yunus was born on February 10, 1899 at Sungayang batu Sangkar, West Sumatra; a religiously-oriented community. He himself also came from a religiously-oriented family. He received his early Islamic education from his family, with both his mother and his father contributing. The first “real” educational institution in Yunus’ “academic life” was his grandfather’s *surau*. Having finished his Qur’anic learning, Yunus became his grandfather’s assistant in teaching Qur’an for other students.

Educational Background: in Padang and Egypt

In 1908 he entered Sekolah Desa (primary school) in Sungayang. In 1910, he left this school and registered at a newly established “Madras School”.¹ In his auto biography Yunus mentions that he was taught *nahwu* and *sarf* and mathematics at this school. The Madras School utilized a *halaqah* learning system. In 1913 Yunus became an assistant and taught in a *halaqah* consisting of five to six students. At the same time, he was still a participant in a senior *halaqah* with other senior students. When his master Muhammad Tayyib Umar retired because of his ill health, Yunus took over his position and started to introduce some reform in the school both in curriculum and learning instruction process.

In 1923 Yunus traveled to Egypt to pursue his further study at Al-Azhar University. In general he felt that al-Azhar is an old fashioned institution that only concentrates on teaching religious sciences.² After completing his studies in al-Azhar in 1925, Yunus enrolled in Darul Ulum University. His main purpose was to study the “general knowledge” since Darul Ulum enjoyed a good reputation for teaching those sciences in Egypt.³ In July 1930, Yunus became the first Jawah student to obtain a degree from Darul Ulum. He was one of the best students

¹ This school has been established by Muhammad Tayyib Umar, a student of Ahmad Khatib.

² Mahmud Yunus, *Riwayat Hidup Prof. Dr. H. Mahmud Yunus; 10 Pebruari 1899-16 Januari 1982*, Jakarta: P.T. Hidakarya Agung, 1982, p. 33.

³ Mahmud Yunus, *Riwayat Hidup...*

graduated from the university.⁴ While in Egypt he became also an industrious writer, the first book he wrote was *Durus al-Lughah al-Arabiyya* and some other books including on the topic on general knowledge such as chemistry.

Having returned back to West Sumatra, Yunus also returned back to his [earlier] career as a teacher. More than that, he started to make some efforts for reforming the educational system in his hometown. Almost exactly a decade later, in November 1940, Yunus established Pendidikan Guru Agama Islam (Training College for Religious Teacher), of which he became the principle of the school. Later on under the Japanese occupation, Yunus became the supervisor for religious education. During independence period, Yunus was appointed as Kepala Bagian pada Jawatan Agama (Islamic Section in the Provincial Office) of the Ministry of Education and Culture in North Sumatra. In 1974, Yunus was appointed as an government official in the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Jakarta. In his new position, he was responsible for designing the curriculum for Islamic schools. In 1951, he was promoted to be Kepala Penghubung Pendidikan Agama (The Chief of Public Relation Division of Islamic Education). When the Akademi Bahasa Arab was established in Jakarta on August 1, 1956, Yunus was one of the lecturers at this academy. In 1963, he became the dean of Faculty of Education at the Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Jakarta. Acting upon a proposal from the Minangkabau community, the central government established an education faculty affiliated to IAIN Jakarta. Eventually in 1966, West Sumatra was granted its own IAIN namely IAIN Imam Bonjol in Padang, and Yunus became the first rector of this institution who led the IAIN until his retirement in 1970.

His works and publications

During his life, Yunus wrote forty-nine books in Indonesian and twenty-six books in Arabic. Their subjects matter can be classified into religious subjects,

⁴ Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)*, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project Southeast Asia Program Cornell University, 1971, pp. 152, 154. In his unpublished thesis, Abdullah also wrote that on August 23, there was a celebration for Yunus' achievement. This celebration was attended by Jawah [Indonesian] students and also joined by several Egyptian professors and *ulamas*, such as Syaikh Rasyid Rida, Syaikh Tantawi Jauhari and some other Egyptian political leaders. It was indeed a great moment for Yunus, since most of the Egyptian *ulamas* and professors who praised his performance were highly respected among kaum circle in Minangkabau and in other parts of Indonesia.

Arabic subjects and general knowledge. Yunus also co-authored a dictionary, namely *al-Qamus al-Zahabi* with Muhammad Qasim Bakry. Yunus himself also wrote another dictionary' *Qamus al-Arabi al-Indunisi* which is still widely published and utilized by the students who learn Arabic, particularly for slight reference for Arabic words and meaning. His well-known book, particularly in learning Arabic is *Durus al-Lugha al-Arabiyya* which was written when he was in Cairo. More than twenty-eight editions of this book have been published, and there are 30.000 copies of it are still produced annually.⁵

Yunus wrote a trail-blessing book dealing with Islamic education in Indonesia entitled *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia* (The History of Islamic education in Indonesia). This book became an important reference for authors or researchers whose interest is about the history of Islamic education in Indonesia. He began writing the book in 1957 and finally completed it in 1960. Based on his extensive works, Bruinessen in his work on *kitab kuning and pesantren* categorized Yunus as among those having the ranks of the top hundred local writers.⁶ His works are utilized in different Islamic schools. The difference between Yunus' work and other textbooks such as *kitab kuning*, particularly those on Arabic is a very simple, concise style the differ form the general style of regular *kitab kuning*.

Traditional and Reform Period: The History of Islamic Education in West Sumatra

To understand the substance of Yunus' ideas of reform in education including in teaching Arabic we should be aware of the periodization he used in explaining and criticizing the condition of Islamic education, particularly in West Sumatra. In general, Yunus classified the educational period in West Sumatra into two main periods; the traditional period (before 1900) in which the time-honoured values and system were developed and applied in the educational system, and the reform period (after 1900) in which the traditional system gradually lost ground and was replaced by the modern concept of education, both in the theoretical sense as well as in the practice.

⁵ Syarifuddin, Mahmud Yunus wa Ittijahatuhu fi Tajdid Ta'lim al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya, in *Studia Islamika*, Vol 2, No.3, 1995, p. 184.

⁶ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat*, Bandung: Mizan, 1999, p. 238.

In traditional period, among characteristics of education is such as an unplanned 'academic' year' and 'curriculum', which are rarely to be found in the educational institution in modern time. If these are still honoured, the institution is used to be considered as a 'traditional' one, even though it exists in the modern period. Yunus also mentioned some characteristic of learning Arabic in a traditional period such as; the sub-subjects of reading, writing, grammar or conversation for instance were not taught in an integrated way. *Sarf*, which is part of grammar was given priority over other subjects,⁷ besides there was always no emphasize on communicative ability as he strongly promoted in his idea of reform in teaching Arabic.

The reform period started since 1900-1908 as the beginning of the reform period, 1908-1930 the period of graded class system and finally 1930 the modernization of the method of instruction, the curriculum, and the institution of academic years. In terms of text book, during the reform period, one subject started to have several textbooks at the same time, whereas before, the students has to finished one *kitab* before studying another. The reform period also had particular connection with the emergence of *kaum muda* movement of West Sumatra. During this several celebrated ulamas are also significant reformers of educational system in Padang such as Zainuddin Labay al-Yunusiyy, Zainuddin Ahmad, Haji Rasul, etc. From 1930 on, the alumnae of Cairo dominated the field of reform. They had the opportunity to pursue their studies in Cairo approximately in the 1920s⁸, including Mahmud Yunus. Many Cairo graduates were appointed as officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.⁹ They helped constructed and applied important policies in educational system in Indonesia.

Mahmud Yunus and the renewed idea of Teaching Arabic

A knowledge of Arabic must have arrived in the archipelago contemporaneously with the penetration of Islam. Many Arabic words have been

⁷ Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam untuk Mahasiswa Fakultas Tarbiyah IAIN*, Jakarta: PT. Hidakarya Agung, 1986, p.53.

⁸ In 1919, there were eighty Southeast Asian students in Cairo; three fourth-quarters of them were Indonesians. The total number of students increased after 1922 with the improvement of the economy in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, See William R. Roff, "Indonesia and Malay students in Cairo in the 1920s" in *Indonesia*, April, 1970, pp. 73-74.

⁹ Dhofier, "Intellectualization...", p. 71.

'Indonesianized'.¹⁰ According to Sumardi, and Indonesian linguist, Arabic is the second language for Indonesian [Muslim] people.¹¹ Within traditional period, learning Arabic, was marked by certain characteristic such as the stress placed on sheer memorization. Under this early system, a student who had already mastered the *Kitab Alfiyya*, which contain one thousand verses on Arabic grammar, had obtained the higher level of learning Arabic, although s/he could not use Arabic to communicate.¹² In Learning Arabic, most of the emphasis was laid on the understanding of grammatical rules and the ability to translate an Arabic texts into Malay or a local language. The students were instructed to master different form of *tasrif* (conjugation), the change of verb form (*tasrif al-fi'l*), singular, dual and plural (*mufrad, muthanna, jam'*), masculine and feminine (*mudhakkar* and *mu'annath*) as well as to analyze the function of each word in the sentence (*i'rab*). In the teaching process, there was no planned program, Sometimes the students had to memorize some Arabic poems, which were more complicated than ordinary Arabic, yet they did not really master Arabic properly. When they graduated from a *madrasah*, the only thing they know about Arabic was the grammar.¹³

Sumardi says that the result of implementing such an approach and method is that the students were not able to communicate in Arabic. Even their reading ability was restricted to certain Arabic textbooks and when they were faced by another Arabic textbook, they were not able to read it. Bakry (co-author of Yunus in *al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim*) believed that the reason behind this is due to the method used in the teaching of Arabic.¹⁴ This method of teaching Arabic came nowhere like meeting a modern concept about learning a foreign language. The appropriate method of teaching a foreign language was not familiar to the Arabic teachers at that time.¹⁵ Until the 1960s, most *madrasahs* and other Islamic educational

¹⁰Siti Baroroh Baried, *Bahasa Arab dan Perkembangan Bahasa Indonesia: Pidato Pengukuhan Jabatan Guru Besar dalam Ilmu Bahasa Indonesia pada Fakultas Sastra dan Kebudayaan*, Yogyakarta: Universitas Gajah Mada, 1970, pp. 7-17.

¹¹ Mulyanto Sumardi et al, *Pedoman Pengajaran Bahasa Arab pada Perguruan Tinggi Agama/IAIN*, Jakarta: Departemen Agama, 1974, p. 11.

¹² Mukhtar Yahya, *Butir-Butir Berharga dalam Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1977, p. 23.

¹³ Sumardi, *Pedoman Pengajaran...*, p. 6.

¹⁴ H.M.K. Bakry, "Peladjaran Bahasa Arab di Madrasah-Madrasah Indonesia Belum Mendapat Kemajuan", in *Dunia Madrasah*, II January, 1956, p.6.

¹⁵ H.M.K. Bakry, "Peladjaran Bahasa Arab...", p. 7.

institutions still applied the conservative method, that would result in passive ability of learning Arabic.¹⁶ In this regard, Yunus came his new ideas of teaching Arabic which had transformed in many ways.¹⁷

In this regard, Yunus came with his new ideas of teaching Arabic which had transformed in many ways. Not only did he propagate his ideas, he also wrote some books on learning and teaching Arabic, such as: *Durus al-Lugha al 'Arabiyya* (1927), *Al-Muhadatha al-Arabiyya* (1955), *Al-Mukhtarat al-Arabiyya wa al-Mahfuzat* (1971), *Qamus Arabi Indunisi* (1981), dan *Metodik Khusus Pengajaran Bahasa Arab* (1982).

In general his ideas can be perceived in several aspects of teaching and learning Arabic such as:

1. *Approaches and Objectives*

For teaching Arabic, there are two well-known approaches, namely *nazariyya al-furu'* and *nazariyya al-wihda*. *nazariyya al-furu'* is a theory that divides a language [Arabic] into several branches.¹⁸ Arabic is divided into different sub-subjects such as *qawaid* (grammar), *muhadatha* (conversation), *qira'a* (reading), and so forth. Each of these has a particular textbook, time schedule, and curriculum planning to help with its inculcation.¹⁹ *Nazariyya al-wihda* is the opposite to *nazariyya al-furu'*. In *nazariyyah al-wihda*, the language is viewed as unity without any dissolution into desperate any elements in the language. Grammar, conversation or reading for instance are taught at the same time and using the same textbooks.

In his view on teaching Arabic, Yunus stressed on *nazariyya al-wihda*, particularly for the beginners (*al-mubtadi'in*). He saw this approach as appropriate to language practice, because a person who wants to use language will do so spontaneously. He does not set aside a time to memorize some vocabulary and then think how to use it in a correct grammatical rules, but he did not ignore *nazariyya*

¹⁶ Mas, "Kedudukan Bahasa Arab Sebagai Bahasa Pengetahuan dan Kebudayaan, in *Dunia Madrasah*, II, Juli 1956, p. 9.

¹⁷ Mas, "Kedudukan Bahasa Arab...", p. 9.

¹⁸ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus Bahasa Arab (Bahasa Al-Quran)*, Jakarta: Hidakarya Agung, 1977, p. 28.

¹⁹ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus...*, p. 73.

al-furu' completely.²⁰ Yunus attempted to effect reconciliation between these two approaches. A teacher should not view the divisions of subjects into several sub-subjects in *nazariyya al-furu'* as a fixed, immutable division, and at the same time he also should not regard the unity in *nazariyya al-wihda* being conclusively so. Furthermore, he considered that *nazariyya al-wihda* is highly suited to teaching processes for primary schools students while *nazariyya al-furu'* met the needs of the advanced students.²¹ This division was made to ease the process of learning itself as well as to fit the material to the students' ability. It would be difficult for primary pupils to learn Arabic with all of its branches comprehensively, but this is no means beyond the ability of advanced students.

Nevertheless, Yunus placed a strong emphasis on *nazariyya al-wihda*, this can be viewed from his published works. He wrote books for teaching Arabic (four volumes), based on this approach in which oral skill takes pride of place. In Indonesia, this awareness has really begun to take root. It became a policy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, particularly under minister Prof. Dr. H.A. Mukti Ali in the 1970s, who suggested implementing *nazariyya al-wihda* as reaction to the traditional system adopted by many *pesantrens* and *madrasahs* in Indonesia.²²

In the objectives of learning Yunus clearly stress that Arabic should be perceived just as a tool for reading *kitab kuning*, that means Arabic in a passive skill and ability. Yunus suggested that Arabic should be viewed as a communicative language, thus usurping the traditional view that Arabic was merely a language of religious significance.²³

2. Method and Materials

Since Yunus was concerned with the *nazariyya al-wihda* as well as with communicative ability, the method, *tariqa mubashara* that he chose seems to have

²⁰ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus...*, pp. 28-29.

²¹ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus...*, p. 29.

²² Sumardi, *Pedoman...*, pp. 37-38.

²³ One figure who believed that Arabic was only for religious necessity was Ki Hajar Dewantara who is known as tokoh pendidikan nasional (a figure of national education) in Indonesia. He said "...Turning to Arabic, I think that only Islamic regions, and especially for Islamic requirement which do people need to master this language. Arabic is one of the language in our country, in present and in the future. It is frequently learned, but it is hardly understood, and moreover it is rarely used as medium of communication. Although there were some Islamic schools have been built in Solo and in other parts, but Arabic is still not widely applied. Therefore, for the daily use, it is not important.

covered these two important strategies well. The principle of the grammar translation method is “cognitive-code learning theory”, while the principle of the audio-lingual method or the direct method is “audio-lingual habit learning theory”. The former lays heavy emphases on the ability to master grammatical rules in a language, while the latter gives priority to the communicative ability.²⁴ And he argued that knowing a language meant knowing its elements and made it into habit, so that it comes naturally.²⁵

The direct method was proposed by the French scholar, Gouin,²⁶ therefore this method is also called “Gouin Method” (La Methode Gouin). The development of the direct method itself began with a rejection of the translation method. The followers of this method assumed that teaching a language should begin with speaking it, not writing it. Yunus’ view of the direct method in teaching Arabic ran precisely counter the grammar-translation method which had previously been common to many *suraus*, *pesantrens* and other kinds of Islamic schools. One of the reasons for the failure to learn Arabic properly was the utilization of the traditional method.²⁷ Grammar-translation method was assumed to be a traditional method, and it dominated learning foreign language till the 1960s. Moreover, the implementation of this method in the traditional Islamic institutions still did not produce experts in translating the Arabic texts. What was produced were the *santris* who were able to read Arabic text in which some words in the text had been translated (*Arab gandul*).²⁸ Most of the learning process was heavily oriented towards providing the students with reading ability, in other words, the children were trained to read.²⁹ The main, and rather discouraging characteristic of this method is that it takes a long time for the students to study Arab, because this was based on *nazariyya al-furu’*. The skill gained by the students after this learning

²⁴ Mulyanto Sumardi (ed), *Berbagai Pendekatan dalam Pengajaran Bahasa dan Sastra: Struktur Humanistik, Komunikatif, Pragmatik*, Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1992, p. 10.

²⁵ Hughes, Arthur and Don Porter (eds), *Current Development in Language Testing*, London: Academic Press, 1983, p.6.

²⁶ Sumardi (ed), *Pedoman...*, p. 193.

²⁷ Sumardi (ed), *Pedoman...*, p. 143.

²⁸ Chosin Siradj, *Metodologi Pengajaran Bahasa Arab di Indonesia*, Yogyakarta: Universitas Gajah Mada, 1982, p. 3.

²⁹ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus*, p. 32.

process was only a passive skill. It will therefore be obvious that the method advocated by Yunus contrasted heavily with the grammar translation in many ways.

Yunus criticized the grammar translation method because it does not stimulate students' creativity. Yunus also suggested that the teacher should not present detailed rules of Arabic grammar. He strongly disapproved of learning Arabic from the grammatical rules only. He remarked "how can students learn grammatical rules from a language of which they do not understand even one word?"³⁰ In an extreme view, the grammatical rules are assumed to be an obstacle to a communicative ability.³¹ In the discussion on the significance of grammar, there are two kinds of Arabic linguist. The traditionalist (*ansar al-qadim*) who think that teaching Arabic should follow the classical method, which was applied by the Arabic linguist (*al-nuhat*). They are convinced that the grammatical rules (*nahwu* or *qawaid*) are the main principles of grammatical rules are assumed to be an obstacle to a communicative ability.³² Any effort to make it easy is useless and destructive.³³ The modernist (*ansar al-hadith*) argue that grammatical rules (*nahwu*) are obstacles to the acquisition of a language. They said that whoever focused on implementing the grammar would run into a more of difficulties in suing the language communicatively.³⁴

In promoting the direct method, Yunus was influenced by two factors. Firstly, he was influence by the teaching of languages in colonial government schools. He expected that Arabic could have the same position as Dutch, which was considered to be the source for learning the 'general knowledge'. During this period, Dutch which was taught by using a direct method. Yunus tried to implement this method in the Normal School. In addition, also he wrote a book for this purpose. These methods and approaches were inspired by the book used for teaching *Dutch Rood Witten Blauw*, which was employed in colonial government schools. The second factor which affected his thinking was his experience when he

³⁰ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus*, p. 23

³¹ Bambang Kaswanti Purwo, *Pragmatik dan Pengajaran. Bahasa; Menyibak Kurikulum 1984*, Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1990, p. 63.

³² Purwo, *Pragmatik...*, p. 63

³³ Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid, *al-Mujaz fi Tara'iq Tadris al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya wa Adabiha*, Bayrut: Dar al-Auda, 1980, p. 172.

³⁴ Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid, *al-Mu'jaz...*, p. 120.

was a student in Egypt, especially at Dar al-Ulum University. In Egypt the idea for learning foreign languages by using the direct method began to emerge at the end of the nineteenth century. As part of the academic establishment there, Dar al-Ulum also implemented this method not standing the test of time as it is not used as a communicative language.³⁵ Nevertheless, Yunus still recommended the grammar-translation method under certain circumstances. He still put it in a frame of an “all in one” system approach or *nazariyya al-wihda*, in which teaching Arabic grammar should be accompanied by teaching communicative ability. The materials to be taught are derived from the sentences or the text of the conversation, but they are analyzed from the grammatical point of view. In other words, the teaching of grammar is inseparable from other sub-subjects of Arabic such as *muhadatha* (conversation), *muthala'a* (comprehension), *mahfuzat* (memorization) and so forth³⁶, which is not being integrated with each other in the traditional system of learning Arabic.

This idea is also reflected in the way he presented the material for Arabic textbook. The book entitled *Durus Lugha al-Arabiyya* applies the given theory practically. The material to be taught is derived from the conversation text, without ignoring either the comprehension or writing ability. In fact, textbooks for teaching foreign language vary greatly according to the approach and method used by the writer. A book on direct method differs from that of grammar-translation method. Therefore, traditional books for learning Arabic, such as *Ajurumiyya*, which Yunus used when he was a student in Padang, and his *Durus al-Lugha al-Arabiyya* are dissimilar. In his books, practicing what he preached, he began to apply some psychological principles by providing some interesting pictures and stories to capture students' interest.³⁷ Yunus was against the teaching of grammar to the

³⁵ This is what happened in Malaysia when English was not a medium in instruction; it showed a sharp decrease of students ability in English. It means that language is not effective, if it is not used communicatively. M.F.Baradja, *Kapita Selektta Pengajaran Bahasa*, Malang: Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, p. 74.

³⁶ See the organization of these subjects in his *Duru al-Lugha al-Arabiyya*. Raja T. Nasr also proposes the similar ideas that Arabic grammar should be a part of each Arabic lesson and should not be taught separately. Besides he also recommend that the fundamental dimension of language learning is communicative skill. See Raja T. Nasr, *The teaching of Arabic as a Foreign Language*, Beirut: Librarie du Liban, pp. 92-93.

³⁷ Mahmud Yunus, *Durus al-Lugha al- 'Arabiyya*, Jakarta: PT. Hidakarya Agung, 1978.

beginners. It should be inserted into conversation or into reading sections.³⁸ With this in mind, he criticized the teaching of *al-Ajrumiyya* to beginners as had been done during the traditional period. His grounds were that at the elementary level, the students have insufficient knowledge of Arabic.³⁹ He regretted that some teachers could not utilize *Durus al-Lugha al-Arabiyya* as it should be. They treated it as a reading textbook. Yunus could not agree with this strategy, as it is clear from his statement “We know that it is not textbook for reading; it is material to be used for all aspects of Arabic including reading (*qira’a*), speaking (*muhadatha*), grammar (*qawa’id*) and writing (*insha’*)”.

This book was a reaction to traditional textbooks which were crammed with list of *tasrif*,⁴⁰ aimed at developing passive skills, and ignored the psychological aspect. Another criticism of Yunus about the traditional textbooks was that they were inappropriate to the Indonesian context and Indonesian students, because they were published in Middle eastern countries set in a Middle Eastern context. In the prolegomena (*muqaddima*) of his book *Durus al-Lugha al-Arabiyya*, he wrote:

I have wrestled with the teaching of Arabic in Indonesia for more than five years. I realized that the textbooks published either in Egypt or Syria are not in conformity with the Indonesian context. Therefore, I am writing this book to make it fit with Indonesian characteristics and I try to present some attractive pictures and a good presentation to help the students and to attract children.⁴¹

3. *Instructional Media and Evaluation*

Instructional media are also indispensable part of learning foreign languages,⁴² and they can be classified into auditory, visual and audio-visual.⁴³ Of these three types, the one most frequently advocated by Yunus in teaching Arabic was the visual media, probably because auditory media, such as radio and audio-visual such as video and television, were not widely spread at that time. He planned a lesson by introducing some objects to attract the students’ attention, even in

³⁸ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus...*, p. 24.

³⁹ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus...*, p. 24.

⁴⁰ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus...*, p. 81.

⁴¹ Syarifuddin, “Mahmud Yunus...”, p. 187.

⁴² Nababan, *Metodologi...*, p. 206.

⁴³ Nababan, *Metodologi...*, p. 206.

teaching reading comprehension.⁴⁴ This approach was also bolstered by the fact that Yunus preferred “*La intuitive method*”⁴⁵ in teaching Arabic. This stresses the function of the five senses. As a matter of course, visual aids would be needed to accomplish this method.

He suggested that the earliest words of Arabic taught to children should begin by teaching them the name of things, which can be easily found around them, like chairs, tables, pens, books, and so forth. In this case, a teacher should show the object to the students when he pronounces the word in Arabic, or if he cannot do this, he can point out the object instead of translating it. The teacher must be creative and he has to know how the instructional method should be put into practice in a lesson and how it should be used.⁴⁶ Accordingly, the recommended method according to Yunus was the direct method in which the native language is not utilized even to translate the meaning of the word. This inevitable means that many instructional media are needed to help the teacher in explaining the Arabic words.

Finally, the last aspect which should not be ignored in learning a foreign language, is the evaluation which is designed to find out what the students knows about the foreign language, not whether he is alert, intelligent, or able to read the teacher’s mind.⁴⁷ An Arabic teacher has to evaluate the students’ ability in various skills such as pronunciation, their capability to absorb in the subject, and a basic competence for pattern practice.⁴⁸ Nasr suggests some aspects should be evaluated in Arabic teaching. These are testing the phonological features, testing vocabulary items, testing grammatical features, testing comprehension, testing student’s ability in translation, and testing the students ‘written work’.⁴⁹ There should be different types of question to measure this ability like multiple choices, true and false, and so forth.⁵⁰ Generally, there are four types of evaluation could be applied in

⁴⁴ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus...*, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁵ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus...*, p. 69.

⁴⁶ Mahmud Yunus, *Metodik Khusus...*, p.34.

⁴⁷ Wiga M. Rivers, *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*, Chicago and London: The Univesity of Chicago Press, 1972, p. 309.

⁴⁸ Sumardi, *Pedoman...*, p. 11.

⁴⁹ Nasr, *The teaching Arabic...*, p. 112-121.

⁵⁰ Sumardi, *Pedoman...*, p. 12.

teaching foreign language the pre-test (the test to know the ability of the student before the instructional process), the formative test (the test after completing one unit of lesson); the diagnostic test (the test provided to identify and solve the problems of the student in a particular part), and summative test (final test).⁵¹

In his Arabic textbook, the test provided by Yunus most frequently is the formative test. This is also called process evaluation, a test given during the process of instruction.⁵² This evaluation can be implemented by using various types of questions such as: true-false, multiple-choice, fill in the blank, and matching test.⁵³ Among these three types, Yunus preferred to use “fill in the blank” question for the Arabic test. Unfortunately, Yunus did not shed any light on the evaluation of teaching Arabic in this work on it: *Metodik Khusus Pengajaran Bahasa Arab*.

Setting up particular measurement of learning, including learning Arabic was not known widely during the traditional period. All of Yunus' ideas emerged within the framework of reform period of Islamic education in West Sumatra as well as in Indonesia in general. For teaching Arabic, Yunus came with the set of renewed ideas that differed from the strategies method utilized in traditional period. What is interesting in Yunus' works is that he came with a relatively complete idea of reform starting from the philosophical aspects of teaching and learning Arabic up to the technical strategies of conducting evaluation. As Yunus also concerned on moral education in all of his ideas of reform in education, he also placed the same emphasis of moral message in teaching Arabic.

CONCLUSION

Mahmud Yunus is among the educationalist that devoted extensive effort in developing reformed ways of learning Arabic. He published several works in this regards, both for text-books and the guidelines books for teachers in conducting the teaching. His ideas of reform had to be placed in a context where there was a conservative ways of learning-instruction of learning Arabic was applied. Then it

⁵¹ Baradja, *Kapita...*, p. 143.

⁵² Abd. Rahman Saleh, et al, *Pedoman Pengajaran Bahasa Arab pada Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, Jakarta: Departemen Agama, p. 59.

⁵³ Wiga M. Rivers, *Teaching...*, p. 311.

can be seen how significant it was his ideas for offering the renewed strategies of teaching Arabic process. His ideas of reform cover many aspects of teaching Arabic, from objectives, approaches, method, material, instructional media and the evaluation.

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